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187, Piccadilly, W.

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*The Forty
Shires; their History, Scenery, Arts, and Legends,* by C. M. Mason, a capital book for the young. Written in a clear, sensible style, and containing pictures of many interesting spots, it will, while affording amusement to its readers, teach them much that they ought to know about their own country, and they will take especial pleasure in finding in its pages descriptions of the neighbourhoods with which they are familiar. *His Father:*

Record Nov 4. 1880

The Forty Shires, by Charlotte M. Mason, is a highly interesting and instructive volume for children, giving the history, scenery, arts, and legends of the counties of England. Topographical order has been observed in the compilation, the authoress beginning with Northumberland and Durham, and finishing with Sussex and Kent. A more entertaining method of instruction could hardly be conceived, and the characteristics of each county are brought before the mind of the young reader in such a vivid manner that a permanent impression is certain to be obtained. Young people who leave school in possession of half a dozen "accomplishments," often display a lamentable ignorance of the most elementary facts connected with their own country. Books like the present, which combine entertainment with instruction, are general favourites, and are of considerable educational value. The volume, which has an excellent coloured map and about twenty engravings, is published by Hatchards, Piccadilly.

With
The Publishers' Compliments.

C. Journal. Nov 13/80

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187. Piccadilly, w.

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The Forty Thieves: their History, Scenery, Arts, and Legends. By CHARLOTTE M. MASON. With twenty-one illustrations. London: Hatchards.

THE design of this work is to take its readers through the various counties of England, describing their principal features and the places for which they are most noted, and so familiarising them with the geography, as well as some portions of the history, of their country. This is done briefly, but in very readable style; and the engravings frequently introduced enable the youthful reader to form a clear idea of many of the public buildings and picturesque spots of old England. A clear map of England and Wales forms the frontispiece. The writer has intended her book for holiday reading, as well as for educational purposes, and we think she has been fairly successful in accomplishing her aim.

Queen

"The Forty Shires; their history, scenery, arts, and legends," by Charlotte M. Mason, (Hatchard's), is a fairly well-executed attempt to familiarise English children with their own country. The more practical parts, such as descriptions of coal-mines, manufactories, &c., are best executed, although the romantic side of the subject has not been altogether neglected. The legend of St. Edmund is remarkably well given, as are others similar. "The Story of Jesus for Little Children," by Mrs. G. E. Morton, is a well-written epitome of New Testament history, which will be found useful by parents. It is executed in a simple yet scholarly fashion with an absence of dogmatism.

Morning Post Dec 6/80.

THE FORTY SHIRES, by Charlotte M. Mason, with twenty-one illustrations (Hatchards), is a charming lesson-book, from which many particulars may be gleaned about each county.

Church Bell. Jan 1/80

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With the Publisher's Compt —

187. Piccadilly, W.

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The Forty Shires. By CHARLOTTE M. MASON.
(Hatchards.)

THE history, scenery, arts, and legends of each of the English counties are here dealt with in a popular and pleasing style, which will render the volume interesting to young readers who may gather from its pages much useful information. Of course very much is of necessity left unsaid, seeing that to thoroughly recount the legends alone of almost any one of the Shires would demand a larger work than is here devoted to the entire subject, but enough is said to awaken attention and to give the reader a fair general acquaintance with the local industries and associations of the various counties.

Rock Dec 10/80.

A delightful geographical reading-book for the little ones is *The Forty Shires* (8), in which Miss Charlotte M. Mason describes the physical aspects, the mountains, valleys, and plains, the rivers, the towns and famous monuments, the industries and products, of each of the counties of England. She also supplies an outline of the most important events in their history. Children who go through this book will know a great deal more about England when they have finished it than is obtainable from ordinary school geographies; and it is so simple and conversational in style as to be well adapted for the use of very young pupils. The volume contains a map and a number of well executed wood engravings.

Scotia Dec 16/80

The Forty Shires: their History, Scenery, Arts, and Legends. By Charlotte M. Mason. (Hatchards.)—This is a delightful book for boys and girls who have to keep up their knowledge of the geography and history of their native country during the holidays. It is as interesting as a story-book, contains numerous illustrations, and an excellent map of England by Philip and Son, of Fleet-street. The "Forty Shires" ought to prove one of the most popular of this season's Christmas books.

David & H. Allen Dec 4/80

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187. Piccadilly, w.

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THE FORTY SHIRES : Their History, Scenery, Arts, and Legends. By Charlotte M. Mason. London : Hatchards, Piccadilly.

This is a comprehensive work on the English counties, full of carefully-acquired information, skilfully presented, and in a style as agreeable to the general reader as it will be fitting and stimulating to the youthful student. The author explains that the book is an attempt to make conceptions of the scenery, the labours, and the associations of the several shires, real and familiar to young readers, and this effort is accomplished satisfactorily. As we read we find descriptions of the physical characteristics of the counties, and their distinguishing features of all kinds, while there is sufficient of biography of great men introduced to add a real living interest to the scenes through which we are so pleasantly and profitably guided. The book is made additionally useful by maps, and pretty, pictorially, by numerous illustrations.

Edinburgh Daily Rec. Dec 7/80

In 'The Forty Shires,' Miss C. M. Mason tells, as much as one volume will admit, of the history, scenery, arts, and legends of the counties of England. A great deal, of course, has had to be omitted, but the writer has made a good selection of the most important subjects, and teaches a great deal about our country in a very clear and comprehensible way. Children will enjoy reading the volume, for it is as little of a *lesson-book* as the good old 'Near Home, or Europe described.' There are twenty-one good illustrations, and a map of England and Wales. (Price 6s.)

Aunt Judy May January 11.

Miss Charlotte M. Mason, in her work on *The Forty Shires, their History, Scenery, Arts, and Legends* (published by Hatchards, Piccadilly, London), has contrived to give an excellent outline of the geography of England, with much additional information which will be read with avidity by the young. In some cases the counties are grouped together for descriptive purposes, when the natural features or the special industries of the localities are of a similar kind. The writer has drawn freely from various sources of information, and has produced a most readable account of the land in which we live. Twenty-one illustrations of remarkable places are given in the volume, which is beautifully printed and very handsomely bound. We quote the following as a specimen of the contents on the subject of "How Needles are made":—

"It is a curious thing that nearly all the needles used in England and the Colonies, as well as in a great part of Europe, are made in an out-of-the-way village, in a farming county. The pretty village of Redditch, at the foot of the eastern hills, has about a dozen factories, or mills, where perhaps seven or eight thousand persons—men, women, and children—are employed in needle-making. The mills are large buildings with long rows of windows, like other factories, and with steam-engines to turn the wheels on which the needles are ground. But most of the processes are performed by hand, some of them at the cottages of the needle-makers. Some thirty different things, by thirty different people, are done to each needle before it is ready for use; and it is marvellous how quick each person is in doing the particular bit of work he is accustomed to. Steel wire, of the proper sizes for needles, is sent from Sheffield to Redditch. A workman takes about a hundred wires into his hand, and with a strong pair of shears cuts them into pieces, just long enough to make two needles. These are made red-hot in a furnace, and then rolled over and over with a sort of steel rolling-pin until they are quite straight. Then the wires go to the pointer, who grinds each end to a sharp point. The pointing-room has many small grindstones, all turning round at a wonderful rate—two thousand times a minute. The grinder sits on a stool or 'horse,' and bends over the stone. Over his mouth he wraps a large handkerchief, and as he can do his work nearly as well in the dark as in the light, he is sometimes only to be seen by the bright cone of sparks which come from the steel he is grinding. His face looks pale, and we know he is doing work which will soon kill him; the sparks and the dust from the steel and the grindstone, bring on a disease called 'grinders' asthma.' The grinders get high wages and do but little work, because their calling is so dangerous, though recent inventions have lessened the danger somewhat. The pointer takes fifty or a hundred needle-wires in his hand at once, and twirls them round against the revolving stone. So rapid are his movements that he can get through ten thousand in an hour. The next thing is to pierce two holes through each wire, the eyes of the two needles. The wires are laid, one by one, under a heavy stone stamping machine with a little raised die upon it, the size of a needle's eye, which makes a groove where the eye should be; the workman works this machine with his foot, and places the needle-wires with his hand; though each has to be done separately, he stamps eight thousand needles in an hour. Then a boy pierces the eye through, and another boy runs wires through the two holes, so that there is a row of needles on each wire something like a comb: the lengths are broken between the two wires, and, instead of double, there are single needles. Next, women they are drilled, tempered, polished, and more is done to them than we have time to describe before they are sorted into packets for sale."

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School Newspaper Jan/81

*The Forty Shires: their History, Scenery, Arts, and
Legends.* By CHARLOTTE M. MASON. (London:
Hatchards. 1881.) Crown 8vo. Pp. xiii. 400.

If our children do not grow up with an intelligent love of antiquity, it will not be because they did not possess advantages that their fathers knew not of. The book before us attempts, and on the whole successfully, to give an account of England in the only way, says the author most truly, in which it can be given—county by county. The information she has collected is not erudite, but then it is useful and very pleasantly related. She dips into many little by-paths of the past that indicate, by delicate touches, the distinctive peculiarities of the Forty Shires; and we cordially recommend the book to those who wish to place in their children's hands a prize or a present which will tell them a little of the great country they live in, its resources, and some of its grand antiquity. The work is very well illustrated, and has also a good map.

"Antiquity"
Feb/81

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he gave England its first Latin dictionary and some of its earliest translations from Greek authors. He published one of the earliest manuals of domestic medicine, provoking thereby the displeasure of the professional empirics of his time. It is said he made a beginning with a history of England. He certainly was one of the earliest English writers upon education, and among the first to vindicate for his own language what Cicero centuries before had claimed for Latin the power, viz., of expressing the thoughts of his contemporaries with force, eloquence, and precision. He lived the life of a man of letters and study, and he was a diplomatist and a politician. His close and intimate friendships more than once brought him into peril or suspicion, for he was a familiar in the household of Sir Thomas More and a prime favourite of that great and magnanimous gentleman. Cardinal Wolsey when in the plenitude of his power brought him under the notice of Henry VIII., whom he served more than once as ambassador; and Thomas, Lord Cromwell, when he grew to greatness, found it necessary to patronize him. He became one of the commissioners for inspecting the monasteries, whose day had come, and when they were suppressed he begged to share in the spoils. He died childless. His books went through edition after edition during his lifetime; they have become among the very rarest volumes which bibliomaniacs gloat over; yet they did their work and he received his reward. Posterity scarcely knows his name, and but for such students as Mr. Croft would have forgotten that he ever was a prominent personage in an eventful time.

"The Gouvernour," says Mr. Croft, "may very fairly be described as the earliest treatise on moral philosophy in the English language"; yet he adds, "For one person at the present day who has heard of the existence of such a book, one hundred might probably have been counted in the sixteenth century who had almost got it by heart." The book, we are told, was published first in 1530-31, and the author's principal object was, as he himself said, "to instruct men in such virtues as shall be expedient for them which shall have authoritie in a weale publike." That he should have drawn freely from the ethical writers of his own age and have laid them and others under contribution is only what every man of alert and comprehensive intellect must needs do, consciously or unconsciously; and the more original a thinker he is, the more sure he is not to neglect the accumulated wisdom and experience of those who have preceded him in the realms of speculation or discovery. Whether Elyot is, therefore, to be suspected of any approach to petty plagiarism, as Mr. Croft seems half inclined to fear, is much to be doubted. When two contemporary or nearly contemporary writers treat of the same subjects, it is almost inevitable that they should express the same views, adopt the same method of treatment, use the same illustrations, and employ frequently the same language. It does not follow that the one has borrowed from the other without acknowledgment. No writer or thinker is so far in advance of his age, especially if he live in a time of peculiar intellectual activity, as to be something quite other than the

spokesman of his generation. New ideas and new views and discoveries are "in the air" for long before the man of consummate genius seizes them, and, by making them his servants, claims them as in some sense his own. But till this happens they are played with here and there by more than one or two, who suffer the winged thoughts to settle for a while upon their pens and then again to take flight, only once more to alight and to be caught at last.

Of course "The Gouvernour" bristles with learning, such as it is—it is the learning of the sixteenth century and to us it savours of pedantry; but the real value of the book lies in the freedom with which the author imports new words into the vocabulary which he found ready to his hand, and in the frequency with which he refers to the manners and customs of his own age. This gives to such an editor as Mr. Croft infinite opportunity for displaying his wide reading and for appearing in the character of a commentator and lexicographer. How full, not to say exhaustive, his commentary may be inferred from the fact that Sir Thomas Elyot's small octavo has been expanded into two thick quarto volumes, the original text being supplemented by at least five times the amount of matter contained in the notes, while the glossary occupies nearly two hundred closely printed pages. So minute and microscopic, indeed, are the notes, and at the same time so discursive, that it would be rash to pronounce an opinion as to what may not be found in them; and the Professor of Latin at Cambridge could hardly have surpassed Mr. Croft in thoroughness, not to say diffuseness, had he ~~saluted these volumes~~.

Mr. Croft's edition is a kind of cyclopædia of the manners, literature, and law of the first half of the sixteenth century in England, such as probably can be found nowhere else in the same compass. It is in the glossary at the end of his second volume that Mr. Croft has done a real and solid service to English philology, and laid the students of our early literature under a lasting obligation. Some notion may be formed of the vast scale on which this glossary has been carried out when it is known that it contains more matter than is to be found in either of the volumes of Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps's well-known Dictionary, and this though the editor does not profess to notice words of ordinary occurrence. When he does get upon a word of ambiguous meaning, dubious etymology, or otherwise calling for discussion and explanation, Littré himself has not displayed more zeal. Thus, on the word "tre"—a word which has long been a puzzle to etymologists—six closely printed columns are bestowed; on "jeopardize" *English*, *French*, *Latin*, *yeoman*, ten; while to that curious word "cokney" (cockney) no less than seventeen are given; and we could ill afford to lose one of them. If Sir Thomas Elyot's book were utterly devoid of intrinsic merit, or if it possessed only a quasi-professional value for the antiquary and the bookworm, no man of intelligence could regret that Mr. Croft thought otherwise, and that loyalty to his favourite author led him on, during years of profound and careful study, to elaborate this remarkable glossary.

Strange to say, the weak point in this book is one which we should least have expected

from so painstaking and conscientious an editor. The get-up of the volumes is perfect, and the copies of Holbein's portraits at Windsor Castle are good examples of the autotype process. But when Mr. Croft deals with bibliography he shows a strange inaptitude for that occult science. Incomparably rare as all Elyot's books are, there is hardly an attempt made to deal with the difficult question of the several editions, nor a single fac-simile of a title-page, nor, in fact, any intelligible description of any one of the curious bookbings which Elyot saw through the press during his lifetime. Even the eight pages which Mr. Croft has spent upon the "Castel of Helth" exhibit bewilderment of mind, and leave the reader in doubt whether he has learned anything or whether his author really had anything to reveal. Of course the book is very scarce, yet the facts are plain enough and simply amount to this, viz., that the "Castel of Helth" was issued in the first instance with an ornamental border, on which the date 1534 was engraved. In subsequent editions this, which was in fact the title, was retained, as was the usual practice, the date of any new impression being sometimes added and sometimes not. Why this should present any difficulty to Mr. Croft we cannot understand. Certainly in a copy of the book which lies before us as we write the title has the old woodcut border with the original date, and inside this border there is printed large and clear, "The Castel of Helth, Corrected and in some places augmented, by the first author thereof, Sir Thomas Elyot, Knight, the yere of our Lorde 1541."

We have only one word more to add. It is hardly to be expected that any second edition of these costly volumes, with all their wealth of comment and illustration, will be soon called for by the reading public. The editor has won his spurs as a scholar and man of learning, and his reputation as such is assured—probably in achieving this he has got the wish of his heart; but if he has a kindly feeling for those students whose gratitude is worth having and their appreciation worth considering, but who yet cannot afford to purchase so large a work in its present form, he will print for them an edition of the glossary as a distinct volume, and he will in doing so deserve and doubtless earn their blessing.

NOVELS OF THE WEEK.

A Child of Nature. By Robert Buchanan. 3 vols. (Bentley & Son.)

Flora Hepburn's Marriage. By Lawrence Brooke. 3 vols. (S. Tinsley & Co.)

A Story of Autumn. By Mrs. Comyns Carr. (Remington & Co.)

An Unlessoned Girl. By Mrs. Herbert Martin. 2 vols. (Marcus Ward & Co.)

Shadows in the Sunlight. By E. Owens Blackburne. 3 vols. (C. Brooks & Co.)

A Modern Sphinx. By Major E. Rogers. 3 vols. (Maxwell.)

MR. BUCHANAN'S novel seems to be intended as a kind of protest against the maxim that "it is well to be off with the old love before you are on with the new." At least, the conduct in which two of the personages, who are engaged to each other, indulge themselves unrepented warrants that conclusion. There is some excuse for the lady,

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for she at her very first appearance catches her betrothed in the act of kissing the "Child of Nature." After this it is but natural that she should herself submit to the same treatment from the "Child of Nature's" brother. The odd thing, however, is that all parties remain, on the whole, excellent friends. Mina Macdonald (the "Child of Nature") has, indeed, some kind of a fever on hearing that her lover is already engaged, and a ferocious old Highlander, her foster-father (who always speaks of himself in the third person singular feminine, but otherwise uses chiefly Lowland forms), does his best to murder Ethel Sedley, the fiancée; but otherwise the course of untrue love runs remarkably smooth. Sir Charles Sedley, Ethel's father, is the person who suffers most from the state of affairs, for he wishes the originally intended marriage to come about; but even he submits, and ends by leaving his daughter to travel by herself in Switzerland, where she meets and promptly engages herself to Graham Macdonald, her former "young man" having already formally given her up—with best wishes on both sides, and, indeed, some active help on her part—in favour of the "Child of Nature." The story is, in fact, a foolish one enough. The author either cannot or does not take the trouble to make acquaintance with his own characters. If he did, he would see that such a transformation as takes place in Ethel Sedley between her first appearance and her last is something quite beyond the woman's prerogative of variety and mutability. Katharina is nothing to her, and in this case there is no Petruchio. The descriptions of Highland scenery would be tolerable had not Mr. Black rather overstocked the market already with that commodity. Moreover, Mr. Buchanan is not always elegant in his imagery: "spittle" is hardly a pretty word to indicate the foam of a torrent in flood. When we have called the author's attention to the fact that a loom is not a spinning-wheel, and that a baronet is not a nobleman except in Dartmoor Prison, we shall have done our duty by "A Child of Nature."

"Flora Hepburn's Marriage" is an unfortunate book in this respect, that both the beginning and the end, the places at which it will be attacked first, are by no means equal to the middle. In the opening chapters the detail is too minute and the story is not broken into quickly enough; but when these are passed, the reader finds himself in the beginning of what turns out to be one of the prettiest and best-told love stories that have been offered to him for a long time. It is particularly disappointing to find the story come to such a poor conclusion. If it were not that the hero—the unfortunate Mr. Charteris plays that part so far as it has to be played—is so well portrayed, one would have suspected that the author was a woman; and even with this presumption against such a conclusion, one can hardly believe that a man would have been so relentless as to deal out what, after all, is perhaps justice to the heroine. True, she had treated her lover very unmercifully, but repentance and time might have justified her acceptance of the man who would have given her a chance of ending her days more happily than by wearing them out in almsheds and in prayer in the

depth of the country, alone, and four miles from a railway station.

The pretty but rather sad story of Madge Craven's one romance is told by Mrs. Comyns Carr with artistic skill. The interest centres in the heroine, there being but little character about Arthur Duncan, though he is represented as a gentleman, and one who does not willingly wrong the girl whose heart he wins before he realizes that his first love is not lost to him. Of Rachel we hear but little, except the description of her physical beauty. A few oddities and affectations in spelling and in the unfamiliar use of words rather detract from the pleasure of an otherwise well-written story.

Mrs. Herbert Martin will be remembered as the author of "Bonnie Lesley." Her new book, "An Unlessoned Girl," though more ambitious, is not nearly so well worth reading. No doubt there was great temptation to Mrs. Martin to try her hand at a more considerable book in point of length than either of her former works. The success of the first was fairly sustained by the second, "For a Dream's Sake." Unfortunately, either she set about her task without adequate preparation, or else she has not yet had practice enough to write so long a story as that of "An Unlessoned Girl." Possibly if she had compressed it into one volume it might have appeared not remarkably inferior to her other books; that is the best that can be said of it. The incidents are commonplace; the character of the heroine can bear no comparison with "Bonnie Lesley," and those of the two principal men are really lamentable failures. It is unaccountable that Mrs. Martin should have been satisfied with such weak and conventional figures.

"Shadows in the Sunlight" is also inferior to its author's former novels. Miss Blackburne is happier when engaged on the patriotic task of introducing Irish character and customs to the knowledge of the reading public, a task for which she has several times shown her qualifications. We do not recognize any peculiarly local traits about the actors in the present story, except, perhaps, the suspicion and untruthfulness which form one of the darker sides of the national character. But such a monstrosity of treachery and revenge as Rose Dugheerty is improbable in any country, though possible in all. The malignity with which she pursues her hapless mistress is only surpassed by the infatuation with which Kate French puts herself into her servant's power. The notion of possessing a stranger with a false idea of her husband's jealousy, and of deliberately lying as to the existence of the child she adopts, in order of securing her husband's love, is certainly Hibernian in its perversity, though we trust an unusual proceeding, even in one so distracted with passion. The character of Reginald Power, the selfish father of the fair Aileen, is one which we fancy we have met with before, and, on the whole, there is no great originality of conception to redeem the painful impression produced by the plot. Next time it is to be hoped the author will return to more cheerful themes and her earlier and happier manner.

"A Modern Sphinx," which, under the title of "Creoline," first appeared in a serial

form in Colburn's *United Service Magazine*, is a quasi-military romance. The scene is laid chiefly in Demerara and there is much attractive local colouring. The plot is fearfully involved—so much so, indeed, that most readers will abandon it in weariness at the attempt to unravel it. It turns a good deal on a disputed succession to estates, and the reader is obliged to turn back continually to find out, often without success, who is who. The heroine Creoline is a half-caste, and it is difficult, therefore, to understand the devotion of which she was the object on the part of several British officers, who are notoriously prejudiced, and would, as a rule, shrink from proposing to Venus if the goddess were suspected of being a half-caste. There are many other improbabilities in the book before us, and there is something repulsive to the moral sense in the pursuit, with dishonourable motives, by a British officer of a girl who afterwards turns out to be his own daughter. The notorious Deputy-Inspector-General of Hospitals, Barry, who on his death, some twenty years ago, was discovered to be a woman, is introduced into the story. Of the others we can only say that few secure our sympathy, while several are positively repulsive. The author is evidently proud of his French, but his acquaintance with the language is not extensive.

HISTORICAL AND ANTIQUARIAN PUBLICATIONS.

In the preface to *The Forty Shires: Their History, Scenery, Arts, and Legends* (Hatchards) Miss Charlotte M. Mason says that this is a book for children. Had we not received authentic information on the point we should never have suspected this. The style is good, pure, and simple, so that people of any age may understand it, and the subjects treated of are mostly of a kind that should interest men and women of all manner of growths. We hope many children will read it; but if its perusal be confined to the young it will be a misfortune for their elders. The idea of the book is simple; it is to tell in a few pages and in a popular manner what has struck the author as the most interesting facts and fancies concerning each of the English counties. Such a work might be done on an enormous scale or cut down to a mere pamphlet. A wise person might make it instructive, and a foolish one certainly would make it either dull or silly. Miss Mason is never dull, and rarely tells her readers things which it is not good and pleasant to know. We should imagine, from the evident care taken with the descriptions, that there is hardly a shire that she has not visited, though of course much of her information comes from printed sources. Though we have detected little positive error—and to censure omissions in a book of this sort would show misapprehension of its object—it seems clear that Devonshire, Cornwall, and the northern counties are either better known or more fully appreciated than the rest of England. The reader feels that so far as the former are concerned he is receiving instruction from a native; as to the rest of England, he is reading the impressions of an intelligent traveller, who has rapidly gone from place to place, heard and seen many noteworthy things, and then made good use of guide-books and works of popular reference. The errors, we have said, are few; among them must be counted the unqualified statement that the object known as "Alfred's jewel" was once the property of the hero king. It may have been, and we think it probably was, but there is no proof that the Alfred who had it made is identical with the sovereign of the southern English. The description of the Bore on the Severn is very good, but it is a mistake to

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Wm. H. Dyer return
187, Piccadilly, W.

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In the preface to *The Forty Shires: their History, Scenery, Arts, and Legends* (Hatchards) Miss Charlotte M. Mason says that this is a book for children. Had we not received authentic information on the point we should never have suspected this. The style is good, pure, and simple, so that people of any age may understand it, and the subjects treated of are mostly of a kind that should interest men and women of all manner of growths. We hope many children will read it; but if its perusal be confined to the young it will be a misfortune for their elders. The idea of the book is simple; it is to tell in a few pages and in a popular manner what has struck the author as the most interesting facts and fancies concerning each of the English counties. Such a work might be done on an enormous scale or cut down to a mere pamphlet. A wise person might make it instructive, and a foolish one certainly would make it either dull or silly. Miss Mason is never dull, and rarely tells her readers things which it is not good and pleasant to know. We should imagine, from the evident care taken with the descriptions, that there is hardly a shire that she has not visited, though of course much of her information comes from printed sources. Though we have detected little positive error—and to censure omissions in a book of this sort would show misapprehension of its object—it seems clear that Devonshire, Cornwall, and the northern counties are either better known or more fully appreciated than the rest of England. The reader feels that so far as the former are concerned he is receiving instruction from a native; as to the rest of England, he is reading the impressions of an intelligent traveller, who has rapidly gone from place to place, heard and seen many noteworthy things, and then made good use of guide-books and works of popular reference. The errors, we have said, are few; among them must be counted the unqualified statement that the object known as "Alfred's jewel" was once the property of the hero king. It may have been, and we think it probably was, but there is no proof that the Ælfred who had it made is identical with the sovereign of the southern English. The description of the Bore on the Severn is very good, but it is a mistake to lead people to think that the similar phenomenon when seen on the Trent goes by that name. No Trent-sider would understand what Miss Mason meant if she talked to him of the Bore. He calls it Ager or Eger, a word which purists will probably admit to be good book English, as it has been used by Joshua Sprigge, the historian of Fairfax's victories, Dryden, and Miss Ingelow.

With the Author's Compt

Athenaeum
Mar 26/81

187. Piccadilly, w.

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The Forty Shires. By Charlotte M. Mason.—
London : Hatchards, Piccadilly, 1881.

This work might be described as a Dugdale in sexto-decimo for the use of children. In a manner, too, it resembles Mr. Dickens's "unconventional" handbooks ; that is to say, it conveys information in a chatty and pleasant form, and must leave even the most desultory reader wiser than when he began. That part of it which deals with the physical geography of our country will probably be largely skipped. So many works of this kind of the "reading without tears" type have appeared lately, that we imagine most children have found them out, and are beginning to look upon them as a sort of sugared pill, as much to be avoided as the unadorned physic. But the stories connected with each of the forty shires, terrible mining adventures, exploits of a Grace Darling, legends of an Oswy or a Penda, all these should bind devoted readers, and make Miss Mason's handsome little book one of the season's successes in its own line. An excellent map of England and several very delicate, pretty illustrations would make its praises complete, were it not that the author has to be commended for the pregnant simplicity of her style and her excellent method. As an illustration of the former this quotation might very fairly stand :—

Is there any reason why this part of England should be full of deep valleys, and lakes, and waterfalls ?

Age before man lived upon the earth, this land of ours underwent strange changes. These northern hills were, at one time, buried under ice-sheets and glaciers ; such sheets of snow and ice as are now to be found in Greenland, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of feet in thickness. The fine snow gathered on the mountain-tops, and was only got rid of by being frozen into a sheet which was always moving down, very slowly, to the lowest land it could reach ; or, the great ice-river would thrust itself into the sea. Of course these ice-rivers grind down the hard rocks over which they travel, grind them and pound them into mud. Great fragments are broken off, too, and frozen into the ice-river, and slowly carried away. Where the ice-sheet descended from the mountains, naturally, it came down with the greatest force. Here great hollows were scooped out of the hard, solid rocks, and these hollows are now filled with fresh water—the lakes of our Lake District.

Northern England is no longer under these slow-moving rivers of ice ; the climate has become so much warmer that the snow will not lodge on the highest mountain-tops for more than a few months in the year. But there are still traces of the time when this once pleasant mountain country lay under perpetual ice and snow ; the deep hollows in which the lakes lie ; the long, flat valleys, which have been worn smooth by the ice-rivers on their slow way to the sea ; and huge boulders, scattered over hill and vale, scratched all over with straight lines in a curious way.

Miss Mason takes the counties one by one, and proceeds after a general survey to a short account of the several large towns and the districts that have either romantic or practical interest for Englishmen. Thus in immediate precedence to the above citation we have, of course, stories of Wordsworth and extracts from him ; the latter, by the way, very forcibly illustrating the "useful information" character of some of his poems. Presently we come to the farming and mining districts, and so as the title professes we are introduced to "The Forty Shires ; their History, Scenery, Arts, and Legends." Solid hard work, such as this book has demanded, finding its way into so readable a form, deserves very warm thanks.

Concordia

Dec 27/91

"The Forty
Shires: their His-
tory, Scenery,
Arts, and Le-
gends," by Char-
lotte M. Mason, is
a capital reading
book for children
who are able to
read fluently, but
are not advanced
enough for the
usual histories. It
is a brief account of
the English coun-
ties, sometimes
taken separately,
sometimes in
groups, written in
a simple and in-
teresting manner
and enlivened with
a few illustrations.

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A very admirable work for young people, entitled *The Forty Shires* (Hatchards and Co.), has been written by Miss Charlotte Mason. It is, as the name implies, a history of the geography of England ; and it is excellently adapted to awaken an interest in the minds of the young in the familiar features of their own country, while it contains an amount of information which we suspect many older folks would find quite as novel to them as to their children. We have read the book with great pleasure, and we recommend it heartily.

John Bull.

For

THE

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(8) Parents and Children. A Sequel to "Home Education." By Charlotte M. Mason. London : Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co.

Miss C. M. Mason's book, *Parents and Children* (8), is a sequel to her course of lectures to ladies on "Home Education," and it deals in the same conversational manner with the same subject. It is made up of a series of papers that appeared originally in the "Parents' Review," the organ of the "Parents' National Educational Union," a society the objects and principles of which it more than once explains and enlarges on. The chapters touch on the most miscellaneous topics of paedagogics—the influence of the parent upon character, the educational system of Herbart, the duty of parents as schoolmasters, the problems of religious education, the formation of character, and what not. They even give pictures, in the readable shape of imaginative fiction, of the application to particular cases, those of girls principally, of the doctrines and theories set forth in the earlier part of the book. They are written with a fluency which makes them always interesting to read. They do not go very deeply into the philosophy of education, but that is probably a reason why they will prove all the more acceptable to those to whom they are particularly addressed.

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187. *Piccadilly, w.*

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ALL the purposes of a school prize are well fulfilled in Mrs. Mason's interesting account of the English shires. It contains a store of useful information told in interesting style, and relieved by anecdote and legend. The dry facts of a school geography of England are very well supplemented by this work; and a more genuine knowledge of the geographical characteristics of our country might be gained by its perusal than by a very long continued application to school manuals of geography. The descriptions of the industries, the arts, and the scenery of the various counties are always of a very readable and instructive character, and the historical sketches and legends will doubtless give the work an additional interest in the eyes of young readers. As a specimen of the mode of treatment we may take the series of chapters on the county of York. Commencing with a preliminary chapter on the leading features of the geography of the county, our authoress gives next a description of the dales and western moors. This is followed by a chapter on the great centres of cloth manufacture, and this again by a very interesting account of the manufacture of steel implements in Sheffield, under the heading "Knives and Forks." After a short description of the Vale of York, a sixth chapter is commenced dealing with the historical legends of the ancient city of York during the days of Romans, Saxons, Normans, Plantagenets, and Stuarts. The final chapter on the county deals with the sea-board. In a similarly varied manner each of the English counties is treated. The book contains a large number of well executed illustrations.

School Board Chmnld.